The meeting was called to order at 6.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes the summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on 8 February 2005 and the resumption of direct talks between Prime Minister of Israel Mr. Ariel Sharon and President of the Palestinian Authority Mr. Mahmoud Abbas. The Council expresses its appreciation to President Hosni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt for the invitation to both parties to the summit and to King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein of Jordan for his participation.

"The Security Council underlines the understandings reached by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, in particular that all Palestinians will stop all acts of violence against all Israelis everywhere and that Israel will cease all its military activities against all Palestinians everywhere. The Security Council calls for the full respect by the parties of their commitments in this regard.

"The Security Council recognizes these understandings, along with other recent positive developments, as primary steps towards restoring confidence between the two parties and as a significant opportunity to enhance a new spirit of cooperation and to promote an atmosphere conducive to the establishment of peace and coexistence in the region.

"The Security Council commends the role being played by Egypt and Jordan in facilitating a successful resumption of dialogue between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority within the framework of the road map.

"The Security Council welcomes the initiative of the United Kingdom Government in convening an international meeting in London on 1 March to support Palestinian efforts to prepare the ground for a viable Palestinian State. The Security Council also welcomes the upcoming Quartet meeting at the ministerial level which will convene in the margins of the London meeting.

"The Council looks forward to further engagement by the Quartet with the two parties to ensure continued progress in the peace process and the full implementation of the road map and relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), and 1515 (2003), towards the creation of an independent, viable, democratic and sovereign State of Palestine living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

"The Security Council looks forward to the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2005/6.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.